

Department of Justice

§ 42.732

limit may, for good cause shown, be extended by the Department.

(2) The Department shall promptly review each such complaint for sufficiency. A complaint will be deemed sufficient if it—

(i) Describes an action that may constitute a violation of this subpart; and

(ii) Contains information necessary for further processing (i.e., identifies the parties involved, states the date when the complainant first learned of the alleged violation, and is signed by the complainant).

(3) When a complaint is deemed sufficient, the Department shall promptly refer it to the FMCS for mediation.

(4) When a complaint is deemed insufficient, the Department shall advise the complainant of the reasons for that determination. A complainant shall be freely permitted to add information necessary for further processing.

(c) *Representation of parties.* During each stage of the complaint process, the complainant and the recipient may be represented by an attorney or other representative.

(d) *Assistance from the Department.* Any complainant or recipient may request from the Department information regarding the complaint process.

(e) *Mediation.* (1) When a complaint is referred for mediation, the complainant and the recipient shall participate in the mediation process to the extent necessary either to reach an agreement or to enable the mediator to determine that no agreement can be reached. No determination that an agreement is not possible shall be made until the mediator has conferred at least once, jointly or separately, with each of the parties.

(2) If the complainant and the recipient reach an agreement, they shall reduce the agreement to writing and sign it. The mediator shall send a copy of the agreement to the Department.

(3) If, after 60 days after the Department's receipt of a complaint, no agreement is reached or if, within that 60-day period, the mediator determines that no agreement can be reached, the mediator shall return the complaint to the Department.

(4) The mediator shall protect the confidentiality of information obtained during the mediation process. No medi-

ator shall testify in any adjudicative proceeding, produce any document, or otherwise disclose any information obtained during the mediation process without prior approval of the Director of the FMCS.

(f) *Department investigations.* The Department shall promptly investigate any complaint that is unresolved after mediation or is reopened because of violation of a mediation agreement. An investigation should include a review of the pertinent actions or practices of the recipient and the circumstances under which the alleged discrimination occurred. During an investigation the Department shall take appropriate steps to obtain informal resolution of the complaint.

(g) *Resolution of matters.* (1) Where, prior to any finding by the Department of probable noncompliance with this subpart, discussions between the Department and the parties result in settlement of a complaint, the Department shall prepare an agreement to be signed by the parties and an authorized official of the Department. A settlement shall not affect the operation of any other enforcement efforts of the Department, including compliance reviews or investigation of other complaints involving the recipient.

(2) If the Department determines that an investigation pursuant to paragraph (f) of this section indicates probable noncompliance with this subpart, the Department shall inform the recipient and shall promptly begin enforcement pursuant to § 42.733.

(3) If the Department determines that an investigation does not indicate probable noncompliance, the Department shall inform the recipient and the complainant. The Department shall also inform the complainant of his or her right to bring a civil action as described in § 42.736.

§ 42.732 Prohibition against intimidation.

A recipient may not intimidate or retaliate against any person who attempts to assert a right secured by the Act and this subpart or who cooperates in any mediation, investigation, hearing, or other aspect of the Department's compliance procedure.